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NSC FOR MGAVIN, LETIM
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SUBJECT: SOUTHERN SUDAN ASKS FOR HELP IN PREPARING FOR ELECTIONS
SECURITY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Voter registration began in Southern Sudan on November 1 amid logistical and political hurdles. (Septel will report on registration progress.) This cable discusses the Government of South Sudan's (GoSS) urgent plea for help in preparing security for the elections following an October 23 incident when a convoy carrying voter registration materials was mistakenly fired upon, killing one civilian and injuring two JIU members. The GoSS has submitted an "electoral security assistance" proposal totaling 8.4 million USD. Donors, including the USG, will need to make quick decisions concerning funding for this proposal and other possible elections security related measures to forestall violence and help ensure a conducive environment for elections in April 2010. End Summary.

Security Incident and GOSS Response

¶2. (SBU) On October 23 a UN convoy carrying elections registration materials was involved in a serious security incident. UN Deputy Resident Coordinator Lise Grande told poloff that the GOSS police escorting the convoy arrived on duty drunk and late. Once the convoy reached a routine checkpoint on the Juba-Terreka road, the police refused to stop and reportedly opened fire. It is unclear whether the JIU returned fire, but the incident resulted in the death of one civilian woman and injuries to two JIU soldiers.

¶3. (SBU) The following day, GoSS Minister of Internal Affairs Gier Chuang Along convoked the UN for an emergency elections security meeting. Grande explained that in previous meetings, Gier had been aware of election security concerns, but did not become seized of the issue until this incident. The Minister relayed that in response to the incident he had appointed a Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Brigadier General (BG) to oversee the deployment of elections materials throughout Southern Sudan and would deploy ten colonels under the BG to liaise with the UN and the State High Committees (SHCs) responsible for overseeing elections preparations. Gier asked for UN assistance and funding for an elections security package that the GoSS had presented to the UN during the summer of 2009.

¶4. (SBU) The focus of the package is on support for the Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS). The Elections Security Package, developed by the UN and SSPS, aims at providing the SSPS with additional training, equipment, communications, mobility, temporary police posts and infrastructure support. The total amount is 8.4 million USD, of which 500,000 USD is already being funded through current UN police (UNPOL) training.

Donors Convene To Consider Request

15. (SBU) On October 30, the U.S. Consulate General Juba and UN co-hosted a meeting to discuss how the international community might support the Minister's request and what other measures might be required to forestall violence and ensure a conducive environment for elections. While the US, UK and UN all have ongoing programs aimed at enhancing the capacity of the SSPS, all agreed that these efforts would not be sufficient to enable the SSPS to provide effective security for the April 2010 elections. Similarly, donors concurred that while the proposal presented by the Minister was "a bargain" at USD 8.4 million, these additional measures alone would not be sufficient. The current baseline of SSPS professionalism and efficacy was simply too low for the SSPS to be able to ensure a secure electoral environment in only six months.

16. (SBU) Donors concluded that they must provide support to the SSPS in order to help it build capacity for the elections and referendum security. Ensuring public order is a police function which the SSPS must be able to assume at some point. However, in the near term, there was agreement among donors that the police could not be the sole focus of electoral security assistance. By necessity, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) would need to be involved in elections security, and hence trained to play a constructive role.

17. (SBU) The GoSS concurs with this hybrid approach and in multiple forums Gier has voiced his intent to involve both the SPLA and SSPS in elections security. However, it is unclear whether the Minister has fully developed this idea, and the GoSS has not yet presented donors with an overall GOSS security strategy. Notional donor ideas have centered on providing joint/joint training for the SPLA and SSPS; creating three rapid response units (based in Juba, Wau and Malakal) capable of reacting to incidences of violence; organizing a senior level conference on elections security involving governors

and other political actors; and establishing a GOSS operations center for the elections.

Next Steps on Funding Elections Security

18. (SBU) At the October 30 meeting, donors agreed to a number of next steps to ensure assistance for elections security begin immediately. The UN agreed to review the elections security package presented by Gier and include information on procurement mechanisms, and prioritization of geographical "hot spots," most likely to experience violence as well as "hot times" in the period leading up to elections, like the campaign period, for example. The US agreed to review the package and identify areas we could consider supporting, in coordination with the peace and security team of the United States Special Envoy to Sudan. The US and UN further committed to jointly meet with Gier to provide feedback on the proposal; elicit a key point of contact for this process; secure his commitment to appoint his best police to work on the initiative; and discuss ideas on how the SPLA should be integrated into the process.

19. (SBU) Comment: We remain concerned with GOSS capacity to provide adequate security during the 2010 elections and 2011 referendum, and will work with the Minister to develop an overall elections security strategy detailing how the SSPS and SPLA will engage and coordinate security during these two events. The international community will need to ensure that proper safeguards are put into place to ensure that "elections security" does not translate into "voter intimidation." Timely USG support and assistance is imperative, as well as close coordination with the UN and UK. Some of the line items in the proposed GoSS package require close scrutiny, including the provision of two vehicles in the capital of each state and formation of rapid deployment units that do not have the equipment to deploy at all. Other items, such as radios for increased communication with outlying areas, make better sense. End Comment.

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